



Fisheries and Oceans  
Canada

Deputy Minister

Pêches et Océans  
Canada

Sous-ministre

**UNCLASSIFIED**

2019-201-00015

EKME #:4028925

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE MINISTER**

**OVERCROWDING OF HARBOURS, MARITIMES REGION  
(FOR DECISION)**

**SUMMARY**

To provide you with information on harbour overcrowding in the Maritimes region, and seek your approval and signature on correspondence to the Grand Manan Harbour Authority (GMHA) and Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association (ACFFA). Harbour overcrowding is increasingly becoming an issue across the Maritimes Region, largely in part due to significant growth in both the fisheries and aquaculture industries. The department's Small Craft Harbours (SCH) mandate is to operate and maintain a national system of harbours to provide commercial fish harvesters and other users (e.g., the aquaculture industry) with safe and accessible facilities.

Currently, a critical harbour overcrowding situation on Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick (see Tab 1) is such that the GMHA has advised the aquaculture industry that most of their vessels will not be able to use the North Head harbour this spring as a result of safety and liability concerns. Moving forward, a plan must be developed to align current and future fisheries and aquaculture growth with its impact on SCH infrastructure that will ensure harbour user safety is maintained while minimizing liability to Harbour Authorities and the Department.

Small Craft Harbours (SCH) is working with the GMHA to advance a variety of options to make room for some aquaculture vessels ahead of the Aquaculture Bay Management Area (ABMA) cycle in May 2019; however, these interim measures will not result in access for the entire aquaculture fleet required to stock and manage these fish farms. The Department continues to seek collaborative and partnering solutions with provincial counterparts, other federal partners, the GMHA, as well as the aquaculture industry, in addressing the overcrowding issue and to ensure safe and adequate harbour infrastructure to support all SCH harbour users on Grand Manan. In the interim, it is proposed that you provide responses to recent correspondence sent by stakeholders on this matter; draft responses have been provided for your consideration.

The Department is currently developing a broader strategy to address SCH infrastructure challenges including an economic analysis of the benefits of such investments. A memo on this will come to you in the coming weeks.

Canada

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## **BACKGROUND**

Harbour usage at North Head, Grand Manan, New Brunswick is at critical overcapacity at 240 per cent. This situation is mainly due to:

- significant growth in the lobster fishery, including larger vessels, in the last decade;
- significant growth in the aquaculture industry in the last two decades;
- closure of Woodwards Cove harbour in 1997 which forced the majority of users at the time (mostly commercial fishermen) to relocate to North Head and Ingalls Head; and
- disassociation of partnership agreements (introduced in 2008) as part of a licensing policy suite of flexibilities which resulted in an increased number of vessels.

The SCH properties on Grand Manan Island are located on Crown Land and are managed through a lease agreement between the department and the GMHA.

North Head harbour is homeport to approximately 53 commercial fishing vessels and 40 aquaculture vessels operating from North Head and/or Seal Cove, depending on which ABMA is active. An additional 22 aquaculture vessels operate from various sites around White Head Island, Woodwards Cove and Ingalls Head.

ABMAs are distinct zones in the Bay of Fundy which are used in rotation by the salmon aquaculture industry as a preventive measure against spreading specific pathogens (see Tab 2). Movement of vessels from sites in one ABMA to another would contradict these measures and safeguards which have been agreed upon between DFO and the Province of New Brunswick. DFO considers this in environmental monitoring and in introduction and transfer decisions.

There is a strong aquaculture presence at North Head, with some reduction in related activity during cyclical periods relating to a shift in the ABMA every 18 months. Although aquaculture-related activity at North Head is reduced when nearby aquaculture sites are in the fallow period, a certain level of activity related to aquaculture site clean-up and preparation for future stocking of sites continues. It is during these peak periods for the aquaculture industry that overcrowding becomes the greatest challenge at North Head. The next period in the northeastern ABMA will begin in May 2019 and will last until November 2020.

SCH has submitted a project proposal for an Investment Plan (\$9 million) at North Head that includes dredging and the installation of floats, which will provide additional berthing spots in North Head. However, this work will only be commenced in four years from now.

ACFFA has created a steering committee comprised of aquaculture industry stakeholders, commercial fishing industry stakeholders and officials from other government departments (federal and provincial). The group will engage other funding partners with the goal of completing the required harbour development at Woodward's Cove. This first meeting of this steering committee is scheduled for April 4, 2019. SCH's total annual Major Capital budget is \$25M. At an estimated cost of \$70 million for the proposed project at Woodward's Cove, the available funding within the SCH envelope is clearly not sufficient.

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Furthermore, indications are that the marine aquaculture industry will continue to expand in the Maritimes Region. This will continue to compound harbour overcrowding issues at Grand Manan and across the Maritimes Region.

### **STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS**

On Grand Manan, harbour overcrowding is getting to a critical point where the GMHA can no longer manage and balance the demand for harbour usage while maintaining user safety and limiting liability for the GMHA and DFO. The demand for harbour usage has been steadily increasing over the years, mainly as a result of a thriving lobster fishery, which is consequently seeing an increase in vessels and vessel size, and prospering aquaculture growth.

To primarily manage the outbreak of water-borne Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA), an updated ABMA framework was implemented in 2006 by the Province of New Brunswick, based on a federal-provincial-industry task force recommendation. The province has indicated concerns if ABMA established protocols are not met. The situation on Grand Manan is at a state whereby the GMHA has informed the aquaculture industry their vessels will not be permitted to move to North Head for the next round of ABMA activities set to begin in May 2019 (see Tab 3).

ACFFA, in turn, has advised the GMHA there are currently no other options for the 2019 ABMA than for aquaculture vessels to berth at the North Head harbour to stock and manage their fish farms (see Tab 4). The GMHA and the ACFFA have exchanged correspondence on this issue. The Department has provided draft responses for these stakeholders have been included for your review and consideration (see Tab 5 and Tab 6).

In addition to numerous actions progressed by SCH and the GMHA over the past number of years in an effort to address the overcrowding at Grand Manan harbours (see Tab 7 and Tab 8), measures are currently being taken to make room at North Head for a number of the aquaculture vessels in May 2019 (see Tab 9). Nevertheless, these interim measures will not result in access for the entire aquaculture fleet required to stock and manage the fish farms.

On March 27, 2019, a vessel caught fire at Seal Cove. The Harbour Authority deployed booms and the Canadian Coast Guard was notified and is monitoring the situation. The fire is believed to have started on the vessel, and preliminary reports are that no structural damage was sustained to the wharf. Should structural damage be found, this could cause additional challenges as Seal Cove is a berthing location in the area on Grand Manan Island.

It is unlikely an accessible solution will be achieved before May 2019. Therefore, the GMHA and the Department will be called upon to enforce the GMHA's decision to ensure safety and security at the harbour.

In addition, the department's Area Office in Southwest New Brunswick is convening an external working group to continue to discuss options for this spring and moving forward.

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**EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS**

DFO has contacted provincial officials with the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries to keep them informed and collaborate on a way forward. The Province is interested in participating in the external working group.

SCH continues to be in regular communication with the GMHA on this matter. The Grand Manan Fishermen's Association and ACFFA are also engaged and interested in participating in the external working group.

**NEXT STEPS**

DFO encourages and supports traditional fisheries and aquaculture fish farming. A plan must be developed to align current and future growth with its impact on regional SCH infrastructure to ensure harbour user safety is maintained while minimizing liability to Harbour Authorities and the Department. To begin moving forward with the development of this plan, senior management within the department will convene a meeting to discuss next steps.

The Department does not have sufficient funding to address the issues of overcrowding directly. As a result, DFO is limited in what we can do to alleviate these concerns. The GMHA is currently challenging DFO's role as the lessor. DFO's involvement demonstrates the department's due diligence for ensuring safe and secure access to the harbours on Grand Manan and elsewhere in the region. We recommend that you approve responses to GMHA and ACFFA's correspondence on this matter; draft responses been have provided for your consideration (see Tab 5 and Tab 6).

The Department is currently developing a broader strategy to address SCH infrastructure challenges including an economic analysis of the benefits of such investments. A memo on this will come to you in the coming weeks.

*Tim Sargent*

Timothy Sargent  
Deputy Minister

APR 08 2019

Kevin Stringer  
Associate Deputy Minister

I concur with the recommendations

I do not concur with the recommendations

*Jonathan Wilkinson*

Jonathan Wilkinson  
Minister

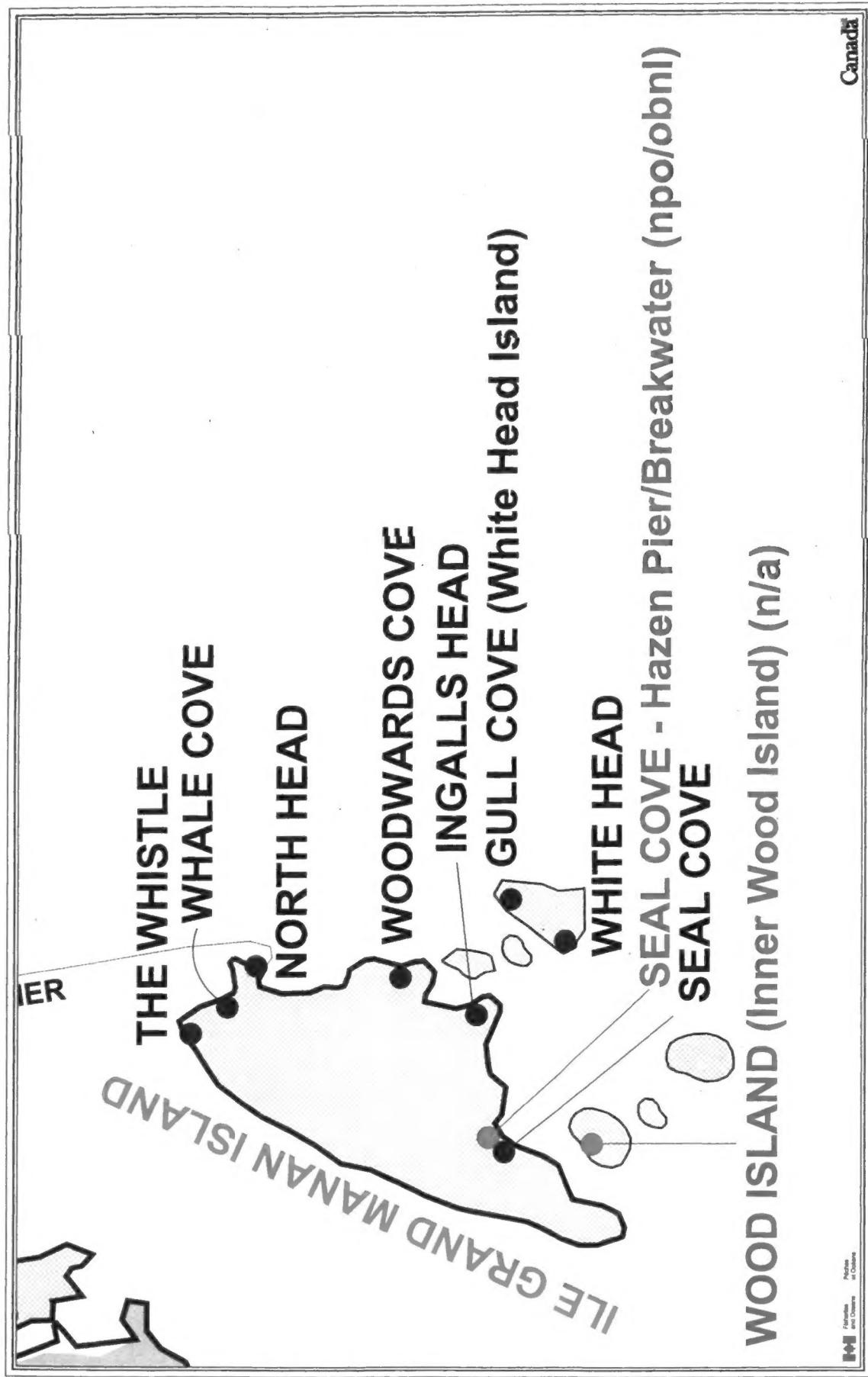
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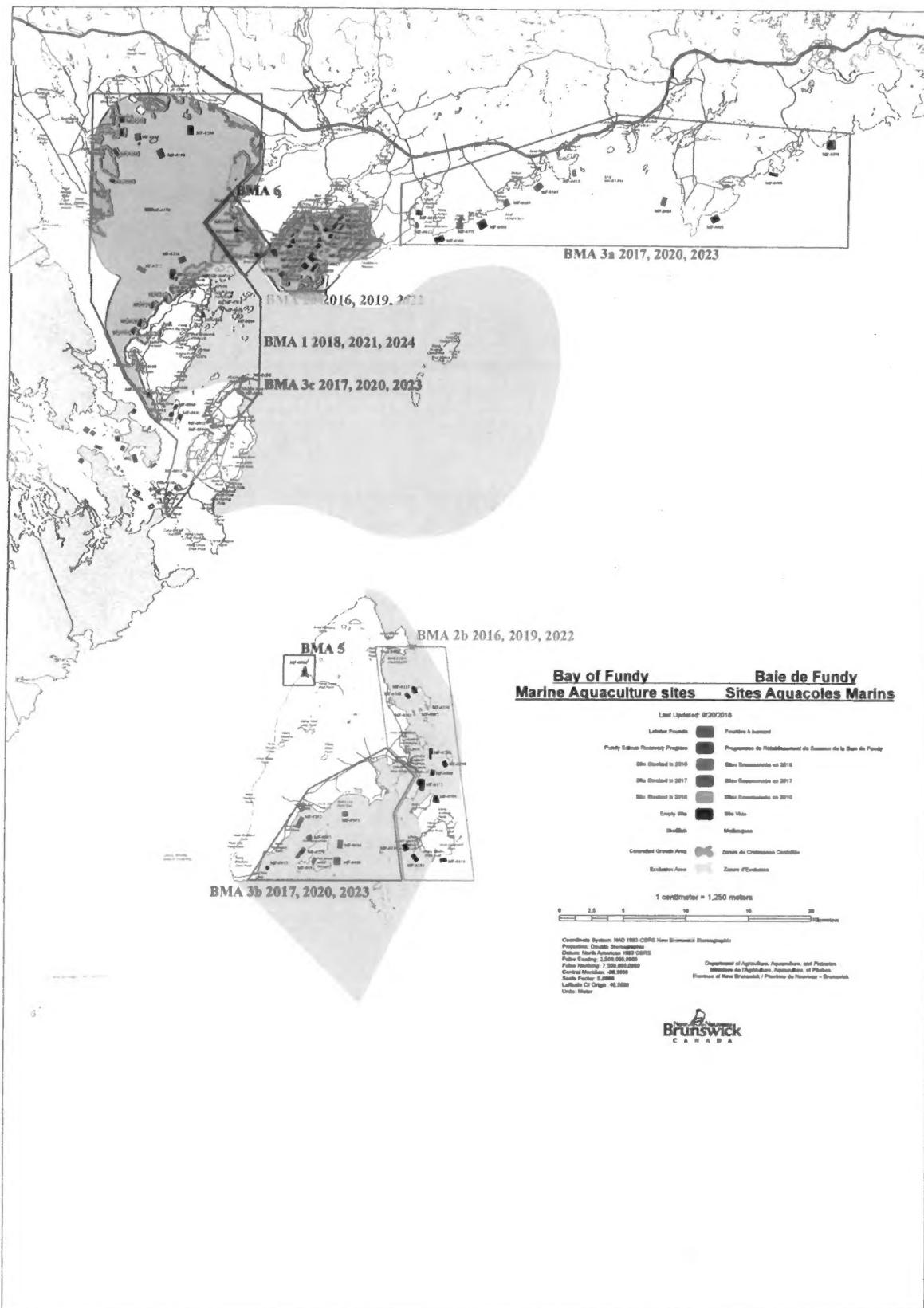
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**Minister's Comments:**

**Attachments:**

1. Tab 1 - Map of Grand Manan Harbours
2. Tab 2 - Map of ABMA
3. Tab 3 - GMHA Letter to Aquaculture 22 JAN 2019
4. Tab 4 - ACFFA Response to GMHA 31 JAN 2019
5. Tab 5 - DFO Response Letter to ACFFA
6. Tab 6 - DFO Response Letter to GMHA
7. Tab 7 - North Head Phase 1-4 Model
8. Tab 8 - Woodwards Cove Harbour Concepts
9. Tab 9 - Measures to Alleviate Overcrowding







# Grand Manan Harbour Authority

PO Box 907  
Grand Manan, N.B.  
E5G 4M1

January 22, 2019

Jamie Gaskill  
Northern Harvest  
2 Salar Court  
St. George, NB  
E5C 3N1.

Dear Mr. Gaskill:

Further to the many discussions we have had regarding overcrowding at our wharves, the Board of Directors recently assessed the overall situation. The main focus was North Head, but other structures were also reviewed.

Given the wharf infrastructure is presently 200% over capacity at North Head, the Board is extremely concerned over the reintroduction of the aquaculture vessels that will be moving from Seal Cove to North Head this year. The situation is further compounded by the increasing size of our fishing fleet. As a result safety and liability factors weighed heavily on the Board's decision.

Small Craft Harbours continues to maintain that their mandate does not support or include the aquaculture industry. Therefore, our repeated attempts to have a serious look at Woodwards Cove as a viable option remains unsuccessful. Without some type of serious relief and the Department's support, it is impossible for the Board to continue turning a blind eye to the overcrowding situation at our wharves, particularly at North Head.

The local Small Craft Harbours staff have worked tirelessly to assist the Harbour Authority in solving immediate problems, but it is not enough. We will continue to advocate for improvements to



## Grand Manan Harbour Authority

PO Box 907  
Grand Manan, N.B.  
E5G 4M1

relieve the strain, but realistically we are years away from solving  
the overcrowding issues.

Your vessels will still be able to berth in Seal Cove, but will not be  
permitted to move to North Head at this time. In the meantime,  
the Harbour Authority will continue to work towards solutions  
that benefit all users as we recognize the importance of  
aquaculture to our community.

Should you wish to discuss this in more detail I would be pleased  
to arrange a meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Brian Guptill  
President

cc: Minister Jonathan Wilkinson  
Minister Ross Wetmore  
Minister Andrea Anderson-Mason  
Minister Bernadette Jordon  
Ms. Karen Ludwig, MP  
Sean Casey, MP  
Ms. Susan Farquharson



# Grand Manan Harbour Authority

PO Box 907  
Grand Manan, N.B.  
E5G 4M1

January 22, 2019

Ted Weaire  
Cooke Aquaculture  
874 Main Street  
Blacks Harbour, NB  
E5H 1E6

Dear Mr. Weaire:

Further to the many discussions we have had regarding overcrowding at our wharves, the Board of Directors recently assessed the overall situation. The main focus was North Head, but other structures were also reviewed.

Given the wharf infrastructure is presently 200% over capacity at North Head, the Board is extremely concerned over the reintroduction of the aquaculture vessels that will be moving from Seal Cove to North Head this year. The situation is further compounded by the increasing size of our fishing fleet. As a result safety and liability factors weighed heavily on the Board's decision.

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Should you wish to discuss this in more detail I would be pleased to arrange a meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Brian Guptill  
President

cc: Minister Jonathan Wilkinson  
Minister Ross Wetmore  
Minister Andrea Anderson-Mason  
Minister Bernadette Jordon  
Ms. Karen Ludwig, MP  
Sean Casey, MP  
Ms. Susan Farquharson



# Grand Manan Harbour Authority

PO Box 907  
Grand Manan, N.B.  
E5G 4M1

January 22, 2019

Morton Benson  
Benson Aquaculture  
6 Old Factory Turn  
Grand Manan, NB  
E5G 2J4

Dear Mr. Benson:

Further to the many discussions we have had regarding overcrowding at our wharves, the Board of Directors recently assessed the overall situation. The main focus was North Head, but other structures were also reviewed.

Given the wharf infrastructure is presently 200% over capacity at North Head, the Board is extremely concerned over the reintroduction of the aquaculture vessels that will be moving from Seal Cove to North Head this year. The situation is further compounded by the increasing size of our fishing fleet. As a result safety and liability factors weighed heavily on the Board's decision.

Small Craft Harbours continues to maintain that their mandate does not support or include the aquaculture industry. Therefore, our repeated attempts to have a serious look at Woodwards Cove as a viable option remains unsuccessful. Without some type of serious relief and the Department's support, it is impossible for the Board to continue turning a blind eye to the overcrowding situation at our wharves, particularly at North Head.

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Should you wish to discuss this in more detail I would be pleased to arrange a meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Brian Guptill  
President

cc: Minister Jonathan Wilkinson  
Minister Ross Wetmore  
Minister Andrea Anderson-Mason  
Minister Bernadette Jordon  
Ms. Karen Ludwig, MP  
Sean Casey, MP  
Ms. Susan Farquharson



Atlantic Canada  
Fish Farmers Association

*Providing a strong, regional voice on behalf of the salmon farming industry*

January 31, 2019

Brian Guptill, President  
Grand Manan Harbour Authority  
PO Box 907  
Grand Manan, NB  
E5G 4M1

Dear Mr. Guptill:

I am writing in response to your letter sent to ACFFA's aquaculture producers, dated January 22, 2019 regarding the Grand Manan Harbour Authority's (GMHA) decision to not allow the introduction of aquaculture vessels to the North Head wharf in Spring 2019.

We appreciate the position the GMHA finds itself in and understand it must make the safety of ALL vessels using Fisheries and Oceans' Small Craft Harbour (SCH) facilities a priority. We do, however, disagree that it is not a SCH mandate to include aquaculture. Although aquaculture is not recognized as a user in the Fisheries and Recreational Harbours Act, they are recognized in the SCH program which states that the "programs primary responsibility is to ensure core fishing harbours (those owned by DFO) are kept open and in good repair, are managed by harbor authorities and are those critical to the fishing AND aquaculture industries (<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch-ppb/aboutsch-aproposppb/index-eng.html>).

Grand Manan is an important fish farming area for our producers in SWNB. The aquaculture industry on Grand Manan generates >\$150M annually, directly employing more than 100 FTE persons. And, at the same time, our farmers see firsthand that the area is continuing to see historic increases in diverse wharf infrastructure user demand. The size and number of your traditional fishing vessels is increasing, in response to more offshore activities and increased resources, and there are new fisheries (e.g., rockweed; sea urchin) adding vessels to the already overcrowded system. As such, we don't believe the removal of our industry's 20 vessels this Spring will provide a solution to the ongoing, well documented issue of wharf overcrowding caused by the inability of DFO to effectively maintain SCH wharves and ensure they remain open to, as their SCH program states, "fishing AND aquaculture" in SWNB.

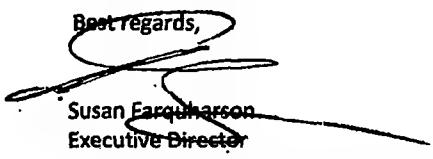
Designated SCH wharves, like North Head, are critical to aquaculture bio-security protocols that provide a robust fish health system and require access to wharf infrastructure for each fish year class Bay Management Areas. The adoption of an area-based management approach for aquaculture occurred in Atlantic Canada in 2005 with its first implementation in New Brunswick to support the release of their Bay of Fundy Marine Site Allocation Policy. The ABM approach enables the industry to address fish health management and enhance environmental stewardship. The Aquaculture Bay Management Area (ABMA) provides for a geographic rotation that allows for appropriate fallowing prior to restocking in the production cycle for salmon and has become an example of sustainable production around the world.

To continue to work in this important area-based management approach and to meet the important bio-security protocols, our aquaculture members must move their vessels to the North Head in early Spring 2019 to stock and manage fish farms in BMA 2b. There is no other option. In the meantime, we are more than willing to come to the table to work with the GMHA to assist in any way we can to address this chronic wharf safety issue on Grand Manan. We must stress however, that removal of our vessels from the North Head wharf in 2019, is not an option.

We request a meeting immediately with GMHA and SCH to discuss this letter and find a solution. ACFFA, in the meantime will be reaching out to federal and provincial elected officials to ensure the impact of the GMHA request is understood and this infrastructure issue in SWNB is addressed once and for all.

Salmon farming is one of the region's biggest economic drivers accounting for more than 40 per cent of the total production volume in Canada with the heart of that production based in New Brunswick. This sector has transformed rural communities in Charlotte County, providing full time employment, new business development and allowing youth to remain in their communities. We can't allow access to wharves, a core responsibility of SCH - DFO, to be a limiting factor in the potential that exists for our industry to create more jobs and more economic growth.

Best regards,

  
Susan Earquharson  
Executive Director  
Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association  
[www.atlanticfishfarmers.com](http://www.atlanticfishfarmers.com)

cc: Minister Jonathan Wilkinson  
Minister Ross Wetmore  
Minister Andrea Anderson-Mason  
Minister Bernadette Jordon  
Ms. Karen Ludwig, MP  
Sean Casey, MP  
Ms. Bonnie Morse  
Mr. Ted Weaire  
Mr. Jamie Gaskill  
Mr. Morton Benson



MAY 17 2019

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E6

Ms. Susan Farquharson  
Executive Director  
Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association  
[www.atlanticfishfarmers.com](http://www.atlanticfishfarmers.com)

Dear Ms. Farquharson:

Thank you for copying me on your correspondence of January 31, 2019, regarding the Grand Manan Harbour Authority's (GMHA) decision to limit additional vessels to berth at the North Head harbour in spring 2019.

As you may know, the Small Craft Harbours (SCH) mandate consists of operating and maintaining a national system of harbours to provide commercial fish harvesters and other harbour users with safe and accessible facilities. The program recognizes the importance of the aquaculture industry as an integral part of the local economy and will continue to work with the industry and other partners to find effective solutions in supporting aquaculture operations where possible.

As it pertains to harbour capacity issues related to this year's Bay Management Area cycle which began in May 2019, SCH has been working with the GMHA to try to find solutions to enable additional vessels to berth at North Head during that period. These interim measures will provide berthing for a number of aquaculture vessels, but unfortunately, will not result in access for the entire aquaculture fleet as requested.

Although priority is typically given to homeport users, the Department remains committed to supporting the GMHA in seeking collaborative and partnering solutions with provincial and federal counterparts, aquaculture and commercial fishing industries, as well as other users, in addressing the overcrowding issue at North Head and to ensure safe infrastructure for Grand Manan harbour users. As such, Margaret Hawkins, Area Manager, SCH, South-West New Brunswick, will continue to participate on the Woodwards Cove Steering Committee. She can be reached at 506-755-5030 or via email at [Margaret.Hawkins@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Margaret.Hawkins@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

Thank you for providing me with your thoughts on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

c.c.: The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, P.C., M.P.  
The Honourable Ross Wetmore  
The Honourable Andrea Anderson-Mason  
Karen Ludwig, M.P.  
Sean Casey, M.P.

Canada



MAY 17 2019

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E6

Mr. Brian Guptill  
President, Grand Manan Harbour Authority  
P.O. Box 907  
Grand Manan, NB  
E5G 4M1

Dear Mr. Guptill:

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As you may know, the Small Craft Harbours (SCH) mandate consists of operating and maintaining a national system of harbours to provide commercial fish harvesters and other harbour users with safe and accessible facilities. The program recognizes the importance of the aquaculture industry as an integral part of the local economy and will continue to work with the industry and other partners to find effective solutions in supporting aquaculture operations where possible.

As it pertains to harbour capacity issues related to this year's Bay Management Area cycle which began in May 2019, we will continue working with you to try to find short term solutions to enable additional vessels to berth at North Head during that period. As you are aware, these interim measures will provide berthing for a number of aquaculture vessels, but unfortunately, will not result in access for the entire aquaculture fleet. Options are currently being analysed as how best to support you in ensuring the safety of harbour users during that time.

The Department recognizes the ongoing efforts made by the GMHA in addressing the overcrowding of harbours under its management responsibility. We remain committed to working with you to develop medium and long term solutions and in seeking collaborative and partnering solutions to address overcrowding and ensure safe infrastructure for Grand Manan harbour users.

Yours sincerely,

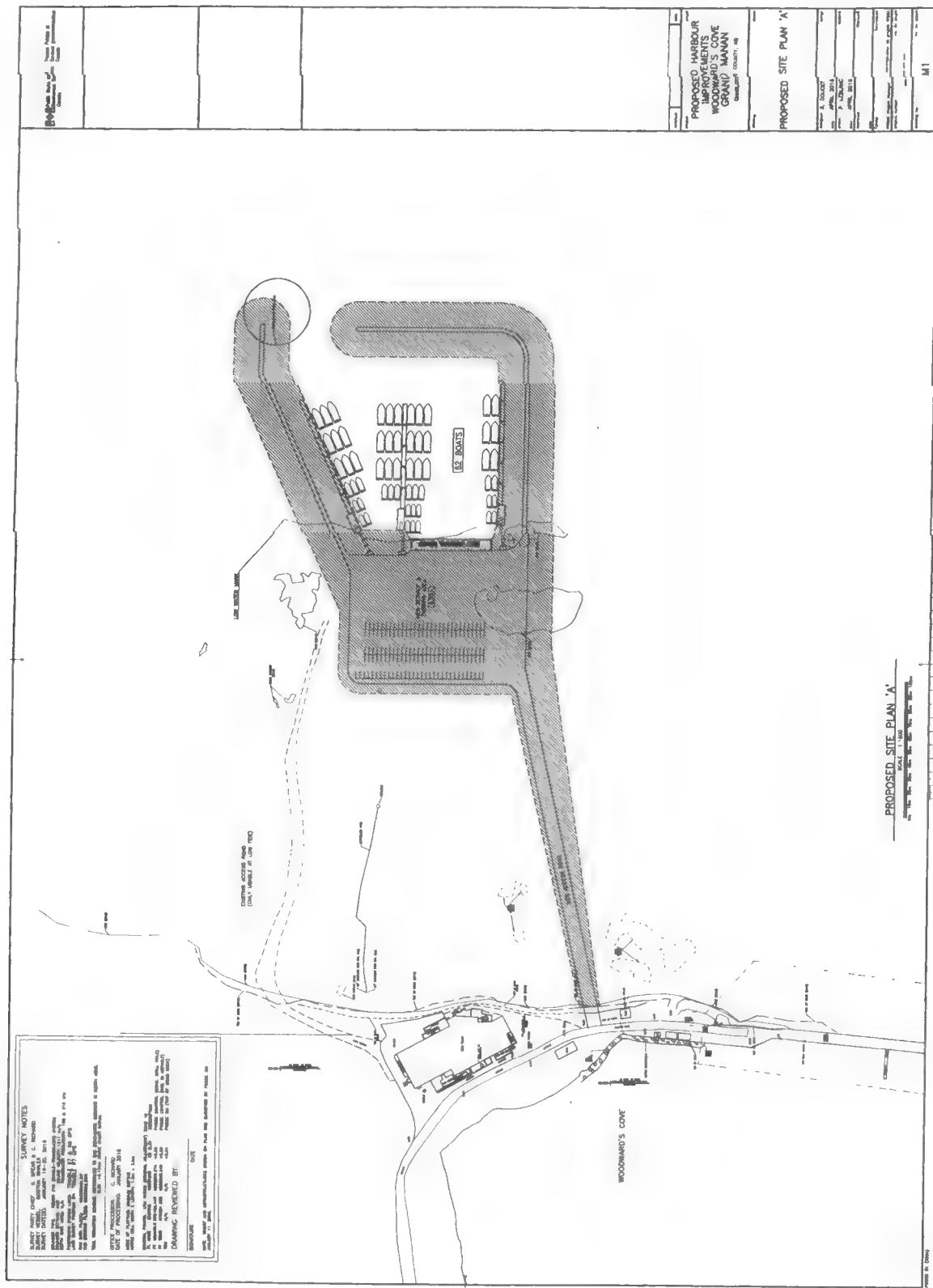
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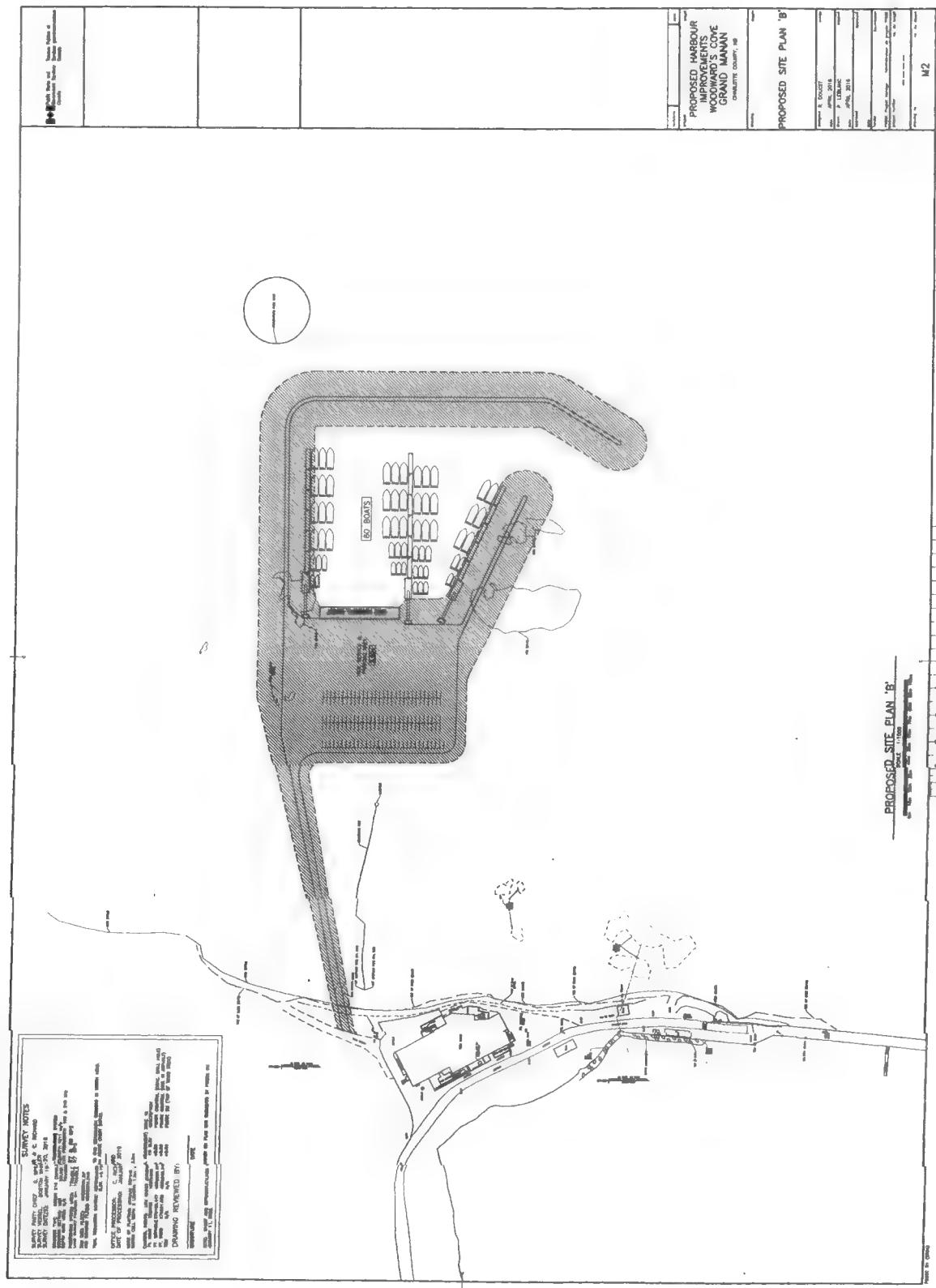
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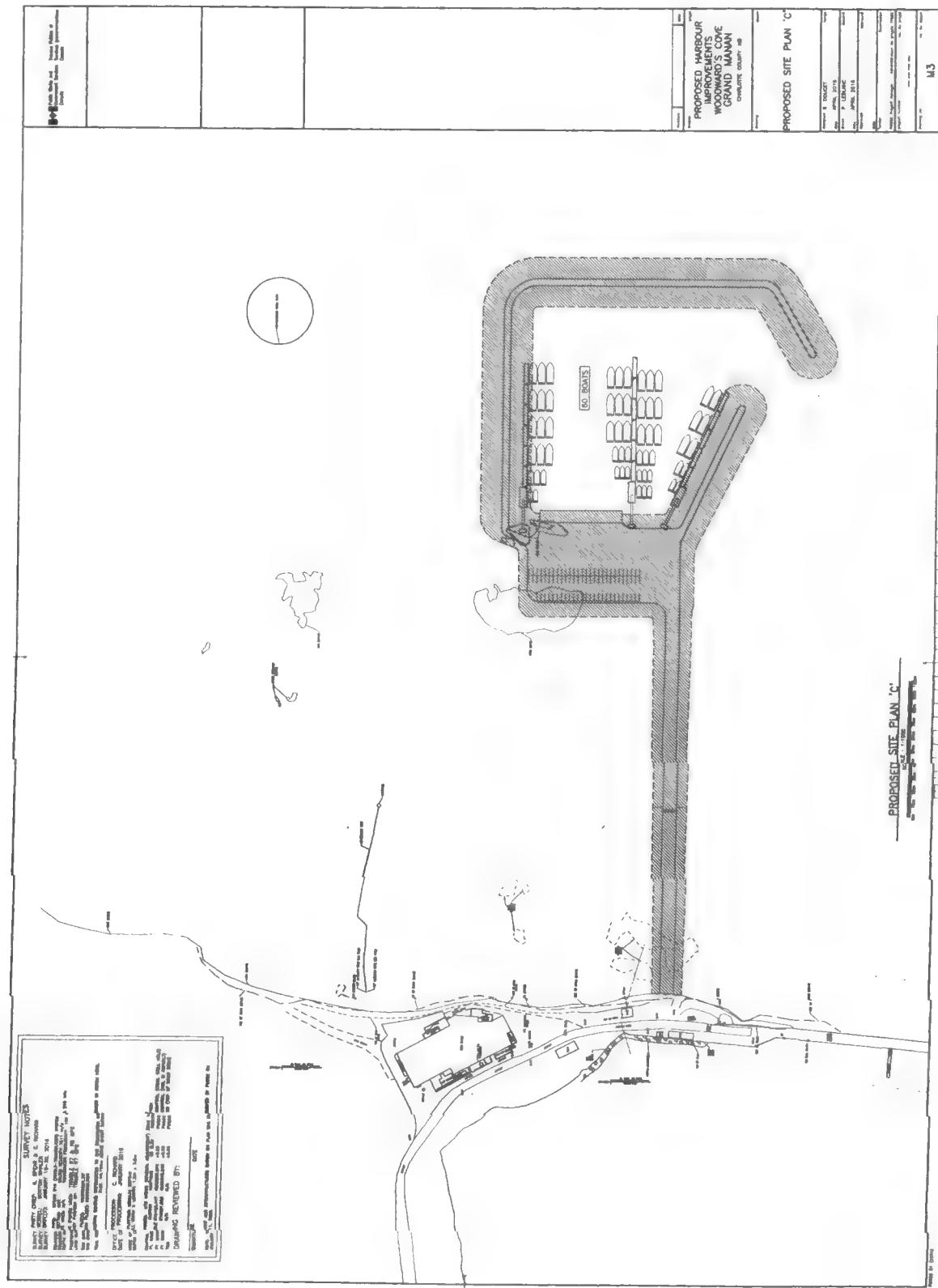
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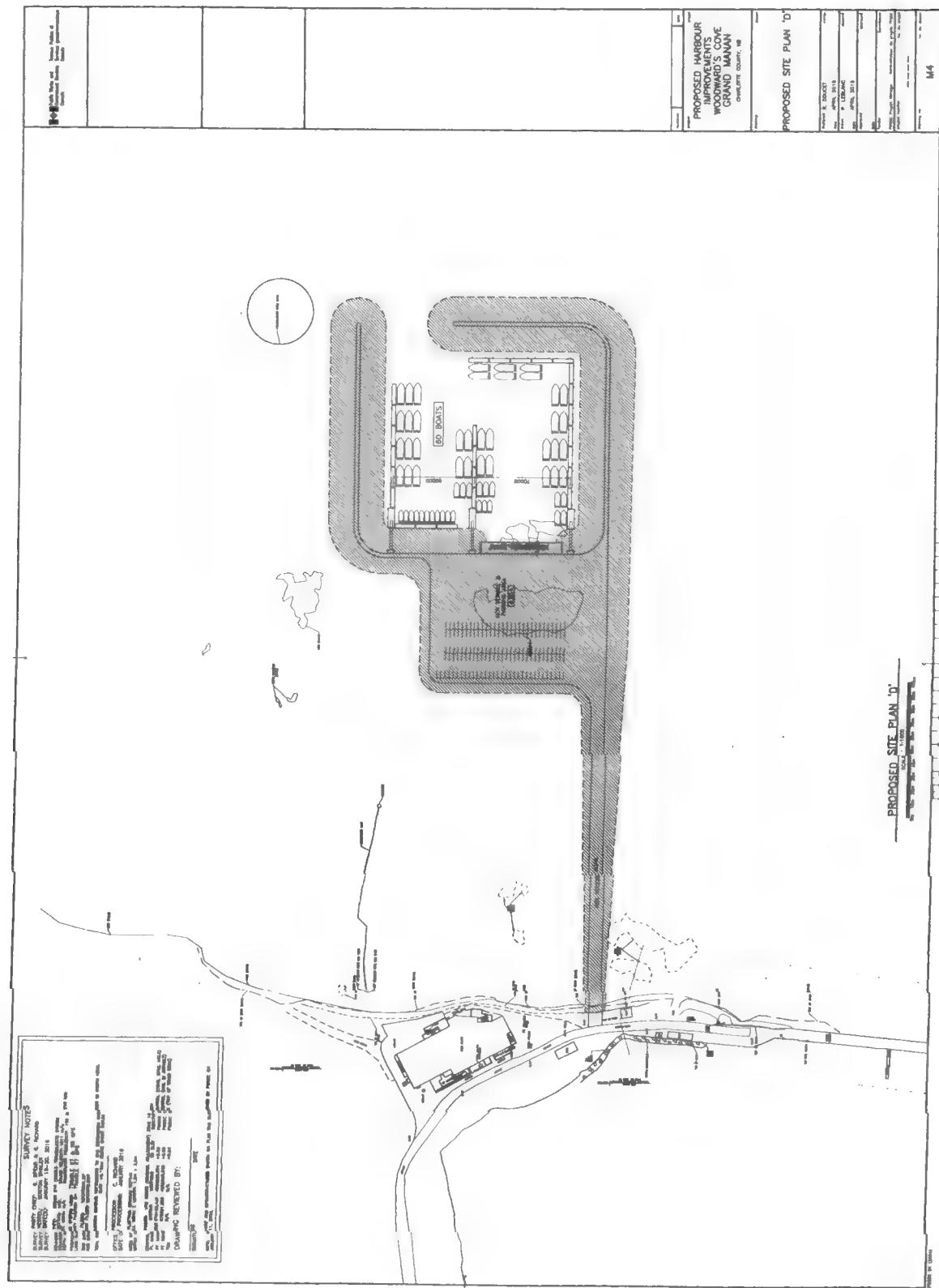
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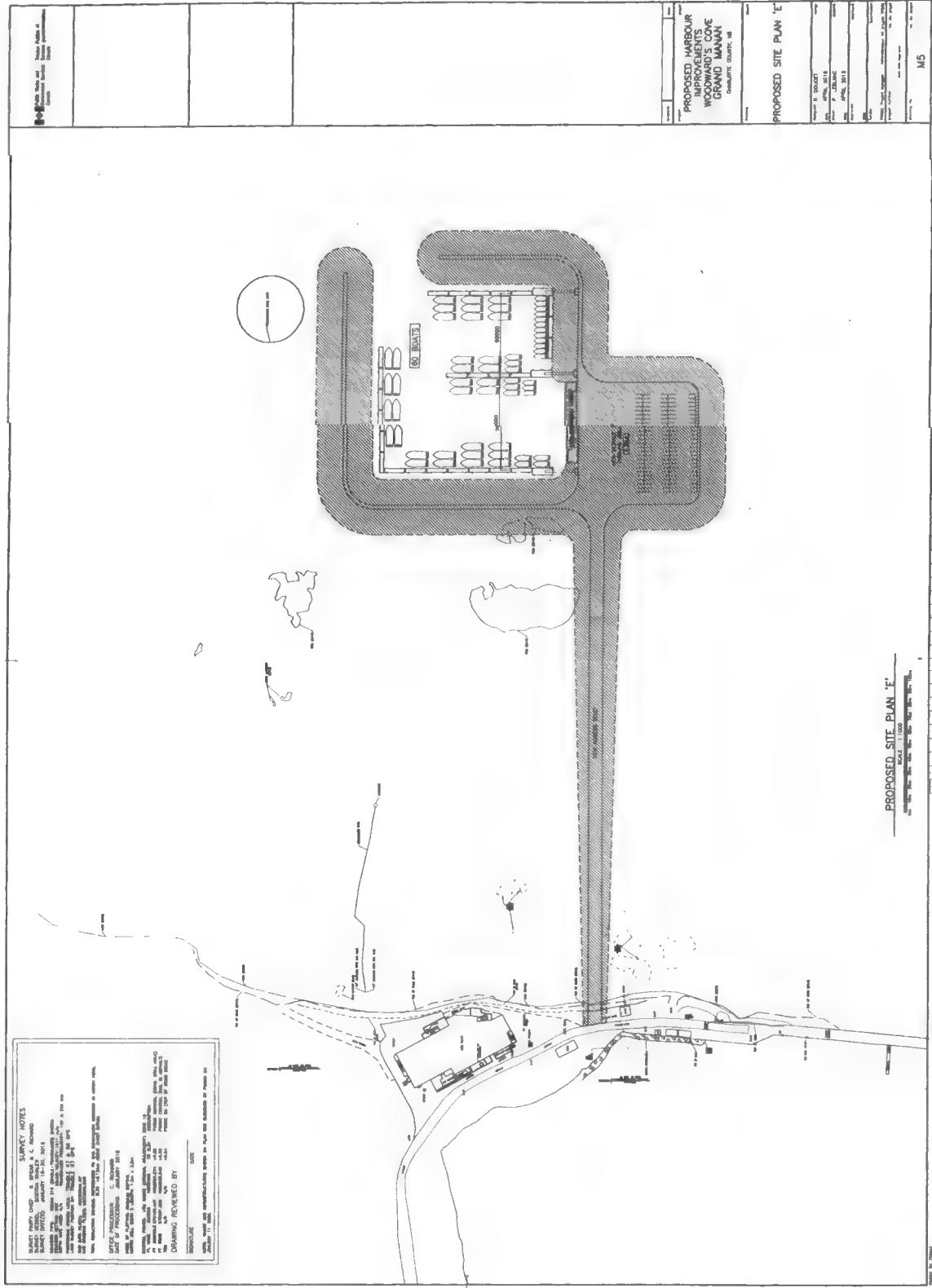


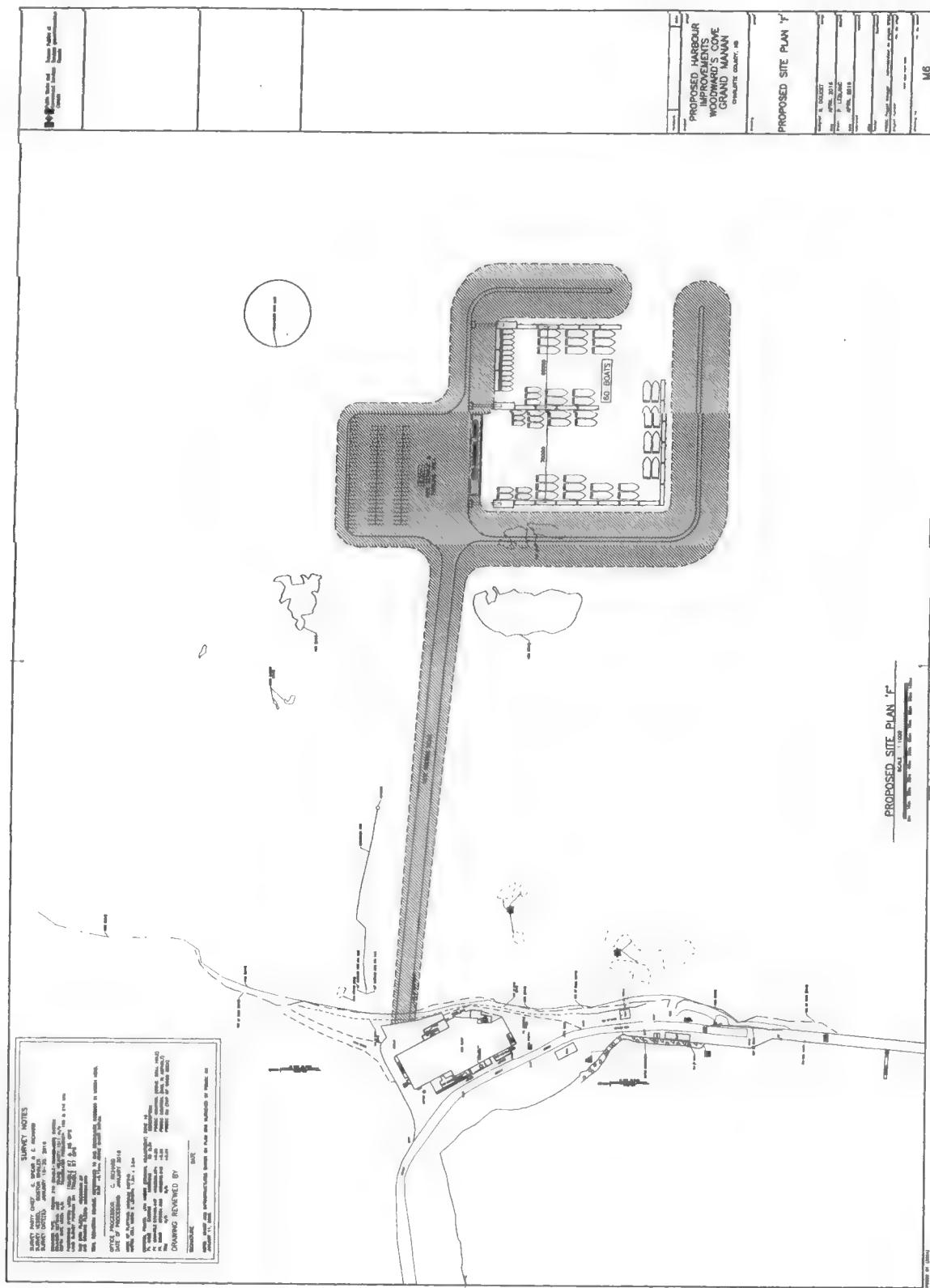


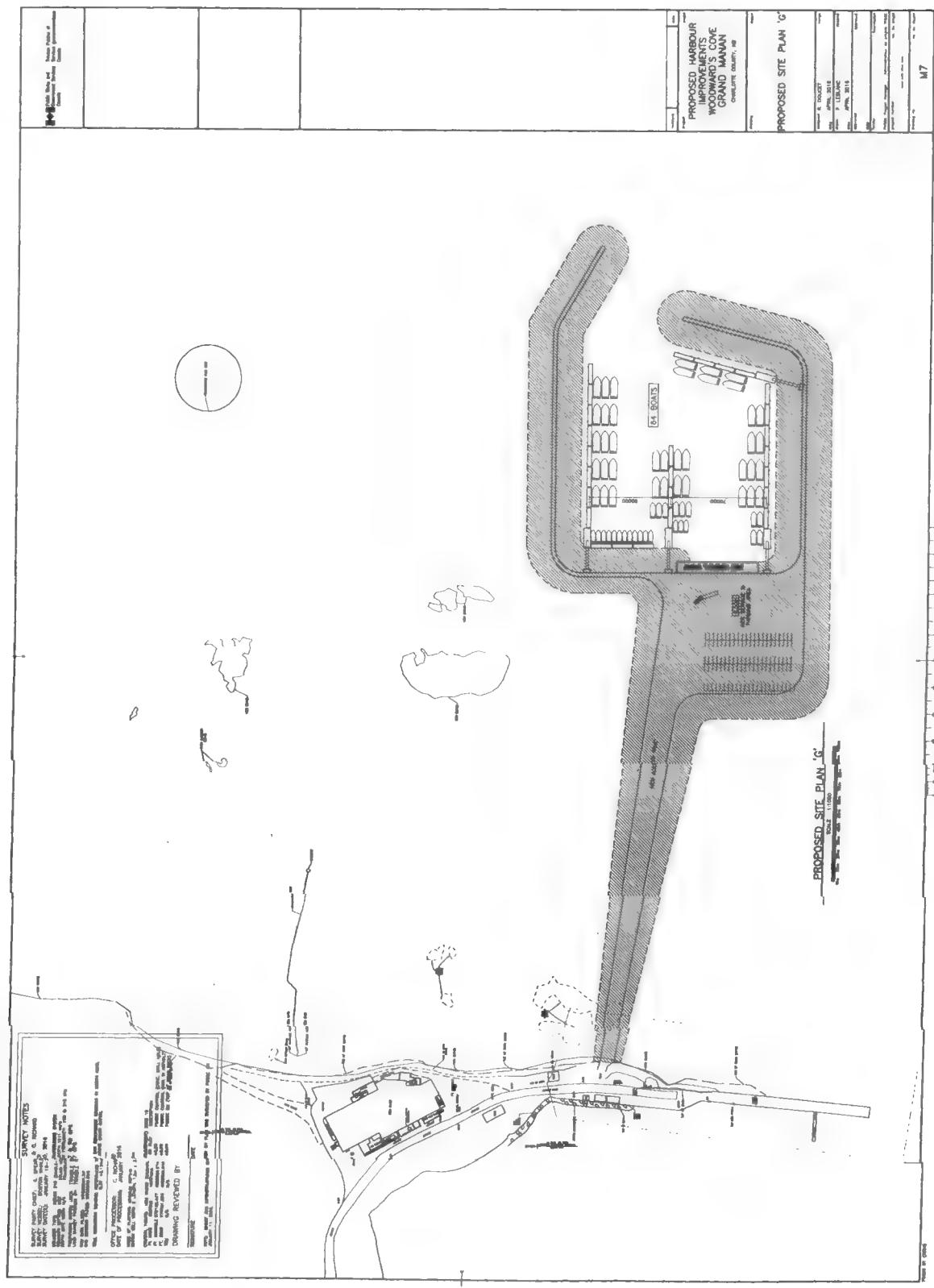


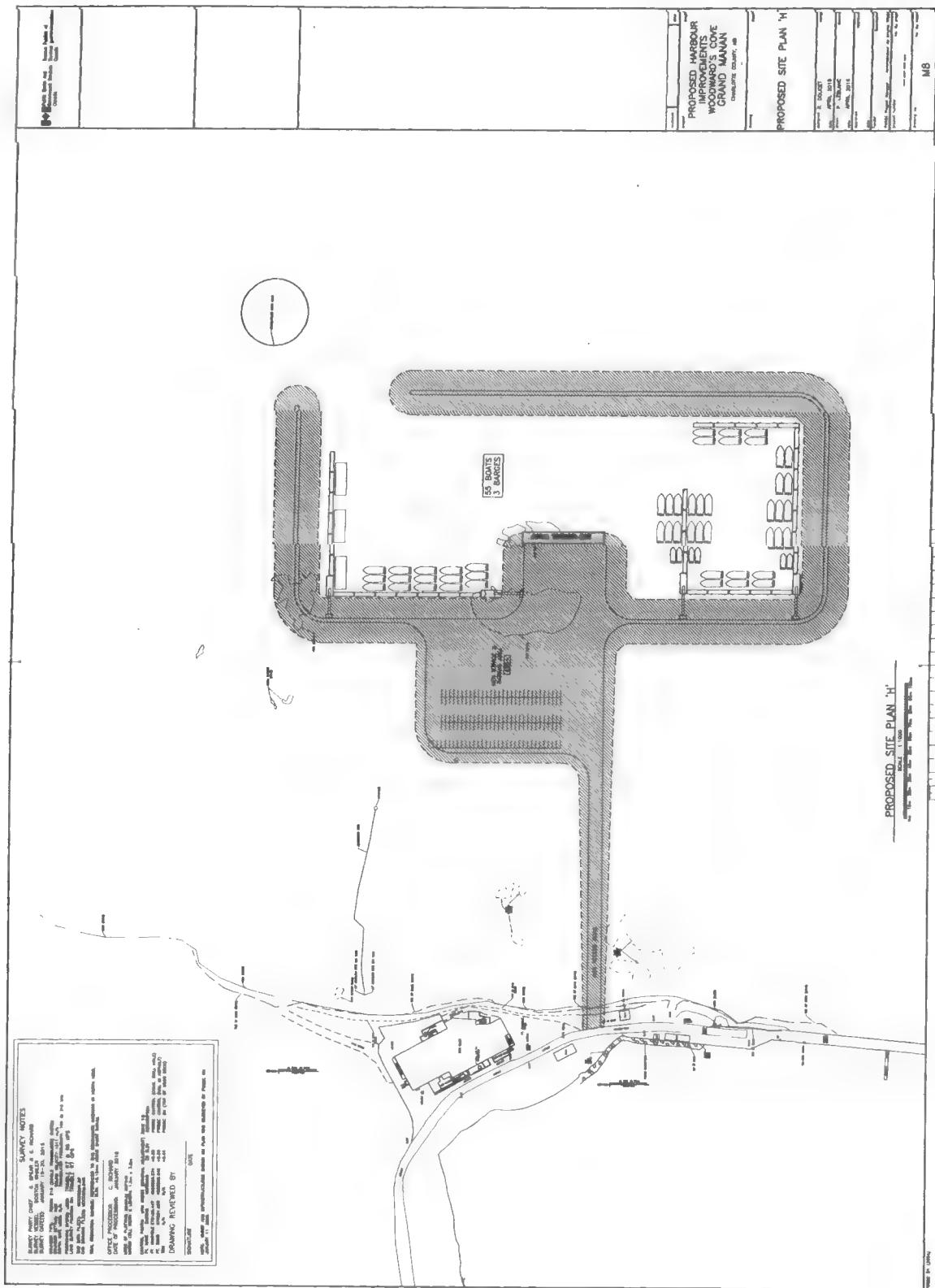


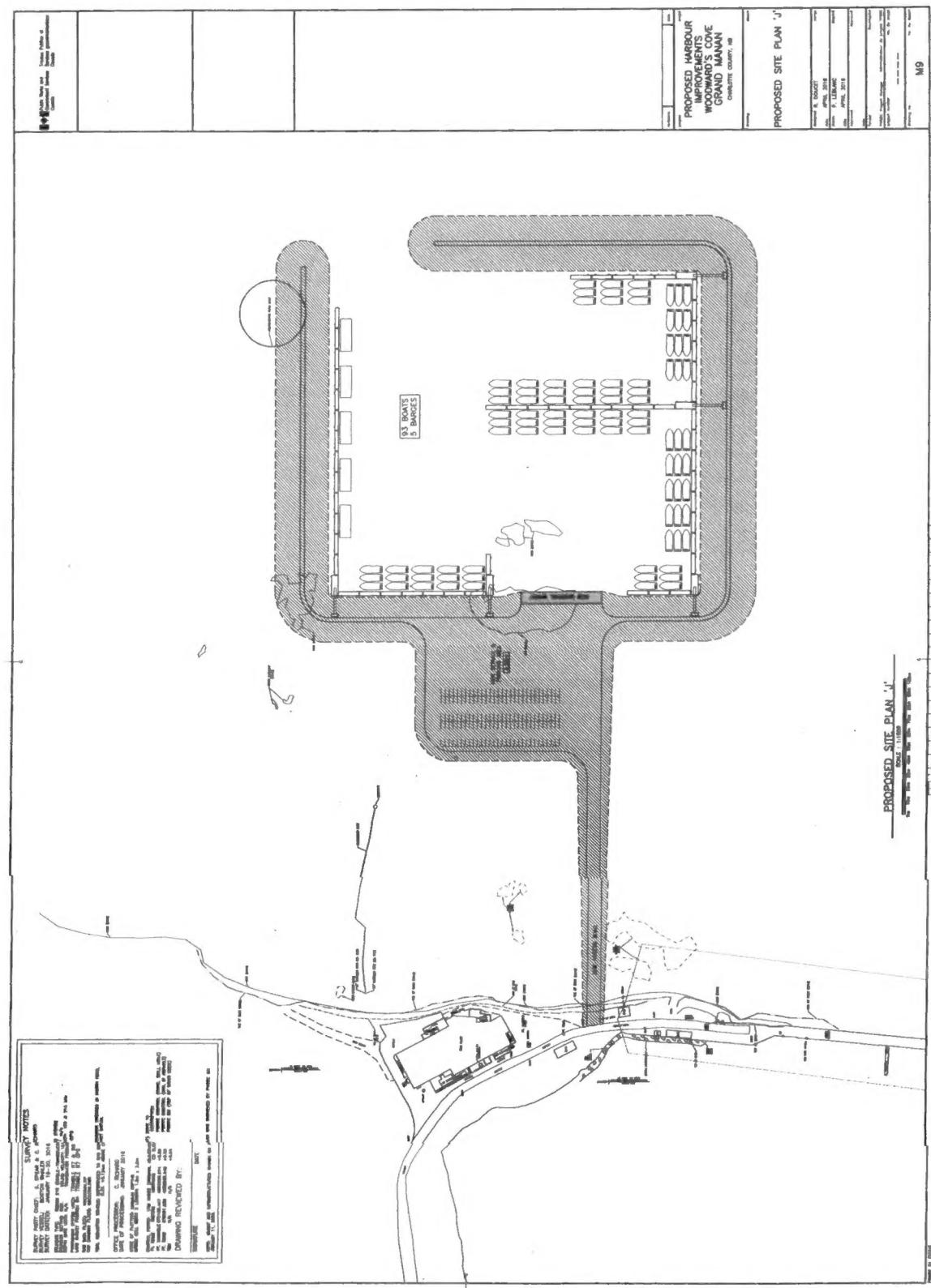


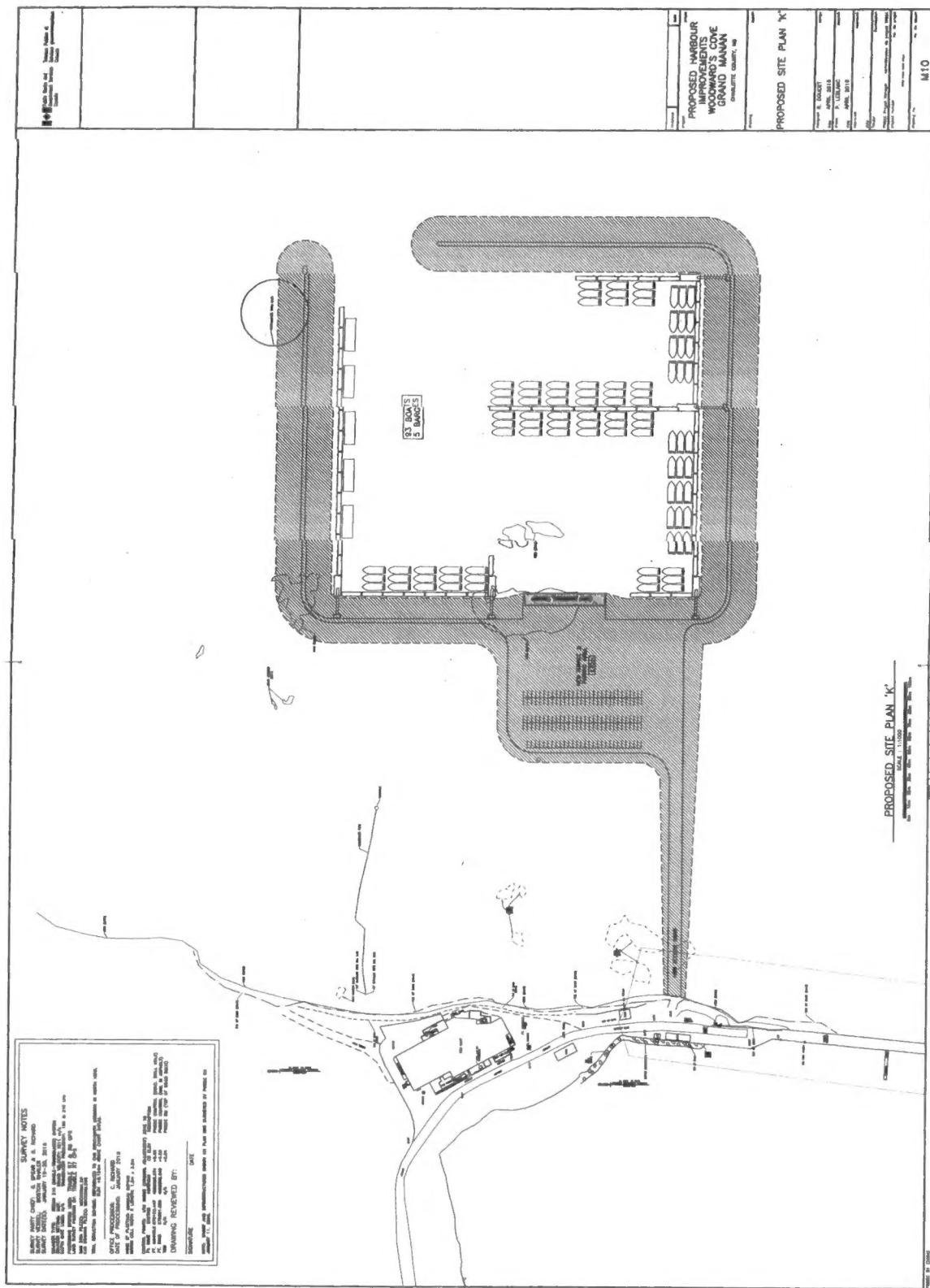












## MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE OVERCROWDING

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- \$42.8M invested at Grand Manan harbour locations over the past 15 years.
- SCH commissioned coastal studies, developed numerous new harbour planning concepts at Woodwards Cove (Attachment#3) and advanced planning for expansion opportunities at existing SCH harbours on Grand Manan.
- Advanced planning on phase 1 of a project at North Head, blasting of rock and dredging of the east basin (4.455M), slated to the investment plan for 2022.
- DFO covered the cost for the removal and storage of the herring boats that were at North Head for the past two years.

### PLANNED MEASURES

- Initiate an enforcement working group to establish a protocol and action plan to ensure the safety and security of all harbour users.
- DFO will be contacting provincial officials with the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries to discuss and collaborate on a way forward.
- SCH will provide 55K to the HA, in the new fiscal year to support the management of the overcrowding issue at North Head.
- GMHA will take inventory of all inactive vessels currently berthing in North Head. SCH will cover the cost to remove the vessels and store them in the service area at Ingalls Head.
- SCH will continue with the Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Removal application process for the removal of a vessel at North Head.
- North Head project phase 2 (5M - installation of floats in the east basin) will be presented at the next round of peer review in 2019. Depending on funding allocations and other regional priorities, phase 3 (10M – construction of ramp and marginal wharf) could be presented the following year.
- DFO will continue to work with the GMHA to determine needs at other island harbours including Ingalls Head and White Head.
- The southern New Brunswick area office will continue discussion with the GMHA to look at reconvening the working group, including provincial and industry partners, to look at the various options in addressing overcrowding and safety concerns going forward.
- Removing/re-alignment in North Head's west basin of lobster car/racks.
- Add an additional float to 801 at North Head, pending further discussions with users.
- String skiff, east basin between floats and ground out bed. Lobster rafts in this area need to be addressed.



**Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Correspondence Routing Slip**

**Fiche d'acheminement de correspondance  
Pêches et Océans Canada**

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED  
GCCMS #: 2018-301-00015

EFKME #: 1038925

**To:** Timothy Sargent **Date:**

**Object:** OVERCROWDING OF HARBOURS, MARITIMES REGION

MAR 07 2019

From / Denise Frenette, Director General, Small Craft Harbours  
De: Mary-Ellen Valkenier, Regional Director General, Maritimes Region

Via:

**Additional approvals:**  
**Autre(s) approbation(s):**

Philippe Morel, Assistant Deputy Minister, Aquatic Ecosystems

Sylvie Lapointe, Assistant Deputy Minister, Fisheries Harbour Management

X

## **Material for the Minister Documents pour le Ministre**

X

Your Signature  
Votre signature

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## Information

**Remarks:** This briefing note was developed in consultation with the following regions/sectors:

- Aquatic Ecosystems (Maritimes Region)
  - Southern New Brunswick Area Office, Maritimes Region

**Distribution:** Please indicate name of people to receive a copy following the DM approval.

- Karen Curlett
  - Denise Frenette

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